

PAPERS READ.

On a New Ganoïd Fish from Queensland.

By COUNT F. DE CASTELNAU.

Plate 19 A.

I have received from Mr. Staiger of the Brisbane Museum a drawing of a very remarkable fish, with the following note :—“It is only found in a single water hole in the Burnett River, living together with *Ceratodus*; and when in August, 1872, I was in Gayndah, I got it on the breakfast table, brought in by blacks from a distance of about eight to ten miles. I had the fish for breakfast, remarked its curious shape, and asked the then Road Inspector to draw it for me, which he did. *Ceratodus*, not well known then, formed the dinner. I was not connected with any scientific body, otherwise I would have, at any rate, preserved the head. The person who drew it is not an ichthyologist but still is a draughtsman.”

On examining the rough and incomplete sketch, I saw immediately that the fish was a *ganoïd* nearly allied to *Atractosteus* but forming, by its dorsal, caudal and anal fins, all united, the type of a new genus, and probably of a new family.

It is remarkable that all the species of *ganoïd* fishes known, having a long, more or less, crocodile back, are until now, only from America. It is evident that from such a drawing no correct description can be given; all I can say is that it shows the existence in Australia of a *ganoïd* fish with a very elongate and very depressed spatuli-form snout; this is much narrower at its base than towards the two-thirds of its length; it is rounded and bordered at its extremity, having very much the form of the beak of the *Platypus*, the two jaws are of about equal length; the eye very small and placed near the upper part of the head; the body is covered with large *ganoïd* scales; the pectorals appear small, and are placed immediately behind and below the head; the vertical fins are very long and united, but notwithstanding, the caudal seems rather distinct; nothing is said of the dentition. Mr. Staiger says also that the fish is of a dirty mahogany color; and he adds that “*the first of the four rays is very strong;*” but

I cannot find out to what this applies. The specimen was about eighteen inches long. As I have already said, the fish that comes the nearest to it is the *Atractosteus spatula* of Lacepede; much better figured by Aug. Dumins in his *Histoire Naturelle des Poissons*, vol. II., p. 361, pl. 24, fig. 7.

In our present knowledge of this singular fish, some inconvenience might arise from giving it a significant name; and I think it is preferable to design it under the mysterious historical one of *Ompax*. The species will bear the name of *spatuloides*.

It is much to be desired that some specimens will soon be found and secured for one of the Australian Museums.

Ompax, by its extraordinary snout, comes also near *Polyodon*, of which one species is found in the Mississippi, and another in the great Chinese river, the Yantsekiang; but these have their body naked, and cannot properly be placed with the *ganoids*.

It is singular, but almost certain, that the teeth of *Polyodon* fall before the fish acquires its full size.

On a species of AMPHISILE from the Palau Islands.

By WILLIAM MACLEAY, F.L.S., &c.

Plate 19 B.

The very remarkable fish described in this paper, and figured on plate 19 B, was taken by Baron Maclay at a place named "Komis" near the village of "Maleggiok" on the Island of "Babelstaub" one of the Palau Archipelago.

It is found abundantly on the sandy beaches of that island at low tide, but does not seem to be used by the natives for any purpose but that of ornament in their houses.

The specimen from which the description and drawing are taken, is dry, but I believe it is not changed to any great degree from what it was in a fresh condition.

The fish belongs to the curious family of *Centriscida*, and in the form and structure of the head resembles much the *Fistularidæ* or Pipe Fishes.